

Commissioner Lori F. Kaplan

Text as prepared for: Partners for Clean Air - Ozone Season Kick-Off and Awards Program

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(Text does not include verbatim comments)

Thank you; it's a pleasure for me to be with you today at the start of another ozone season in Northwest Indiana and our state.

Jeff Moody, Pat Moody/Save the Dunes

We begin this ozone season on several positive notes:

- Air quality in Northwest Indiana and Indiana is better today than it has been in years,
- For the first time ever, all Indiana counties are in "attainment" for the one-hour standard for ground-level ozone,
- Indiana is on the cusp of making significant strides in reducing nitrogen oxides, one of the precursors of ozone, with its recently adopted NOx Rule and
- People, through the education efforts of organizations like Partners for Clean Air, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission and my department, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, are getting the message that they must take responsibility for the environment in which they live.
- And this includes taking proactive measures on Ozone Action Days to cut back on their activities that contribute to unhealthy ground-level ozone.

So, ozone continues to be a serious problem.

- According to the American Lung Association, nearly half of all Americans – about 140 million of us – live, work and play in areas with unhealthy air.
- That's why the efforts of groups such as the Partners for Clean Air are so vital; as the American Lung Association so aptly puts it: "When you can't breathe, nothing else matters."
- And ground-level ozone is a problem we can tackle to help improve our overall air quality.

Today we recognize several Outstanding Commitment Award winners

- For the past six years the Partners for Clean Air has set a wonderful example in Northwest Indiana, combining initiative and innovation to reduce harmful ground-level ozone. Your dedication and enthusiasm have made a significant impact.

Ozone Action Days

- But before we hand out the much deserved awards, let me say a few things about air quality in Northwest Indiana and what we're doing together to make it better.
- In 2001, Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties had 11 ozone action days.
- Of those action days, there was only one exceedance of the one-hour ozone standard.
- As I mentioned a few minutes before, for the first time since Congress passed the Clean Air Act amendments in 1990, Lake and Porter counties have reached attainment status for the one-hour health standard.
- This is a goal the EPA had given us until 2007 to accomplish.
- This is a significant improvement for an area labeled as being in "severe non attainment."
- This could not have happened without increased public awareness and the combined commitments of the industries and local governments involved in Partners for Clean Air.
- Thank you for your **hard work** and diligent efforts.

Nitrogen Oxides Control Rule

Groundbreaking rulemaking

- And speaking of hard work, another great success that we enjoyed since we last gathered a year ago is the adoption of the NOx rule.
- Last year's adoption of this rule means certain industries will be required to reduce their NOx emissions throughout the ozone season (May – September) beginning in 2004.
- By 2007, the rule's implementation will substantially lower NOx emissions in Indiana.
- Statistics paint a striking picture about the **positive impact** this rule will have in Indiana:
 - Without the rule in place, statewide NOx emissions in 2007 were predicted to be 340,000 tons during the ozone season.
 - With the rule in place, IDEM and the EPA predict that emissions will be reduced by 106,000 tons!
 - That's a **one-third reduction** just during ozone season.
 - By 2005, the rule will reduce the amount of NOx emissions from power plants, large boilers and cement kilns by 31 percent based on 1990 levels!

Conclusion

- We are making progress in cleaning up Northwest Indiana's, Indiana's and America's air.
- This is an exciting time for Northwest Indiana's air quality. And you, The Partners for Clean Air, have been and will continue to be instrumental in achieving these goals.
- Keep up the effort and the good work.
- Now, I think Cynthia Hearn from IDEM's Northwest Regional Office will introduce our award winners.
- Thank you very much for having me today and I hope you will join me in recognizing their hard work and dedication.
- Cynthia...